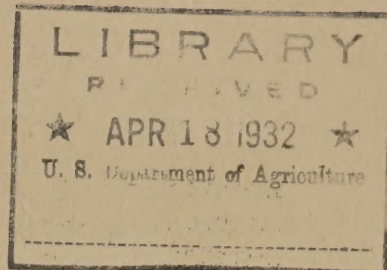




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United States Department of Agriculture
Extension Service
Office of Cooperative Extension Work



NATIONAL 4-H CLUB RADIO PROGRAM
1931-32 Music Achievement Test
"Learning to Know America's Music"
April 2, 1932

America's Country-Dances

Descriptive notes prepared and broadcast by R. A. Turner, field agent, Office of Cooperative Extension Work, United States Department of Agriculture, to interpret the group of musical compositions played by the United States Marine Band during the National 4-H Club Radio Program of April 2, 1932.

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A feature of the National 4-H Club Radio Program is the national music achievement test. This is a series of related musical compositions that have been grouped to facilitate study of the music. Music for the 1931-32 series has been selected to cover the central theme, "Learning to Know America's Music." These musical programs, played by the United States Marine Band and explained by R. A. Turner, are broadcast regularly on the first Saturday of each month from 12.30 to 1.30 p.m., eastern standard time. Other features on this program are talks by 4-H club members and extension workers. The groups of musical compositions included in the 1931-32 national music achievement test, "Learning to Know America's Music," and the dates scheduled for broadcasting them are as follows:

December 5, 1931 - America's Indian Music; January 2, 1932 - America's Negro Spirituals and Songs; February 6 - America's Patriotic Music; March 5 - America's Hymns and Religious Songs; April 2 - America's Country-Dances; May 7 - America's Favorite Songs; June 4 - America's Favorite Composers; and July 2 - Final National 4-H Club Music Achievement Test.

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How do you do, 4-H club folks and friends.

Once again by means of the magic of radio, Uncle Sam's great 4-H club family, in all sections of America, the beautiful, joins with the United States Marine Band to enjoy another broadcast in our series entitled, "Learning to Know America's Music."

DISTRIBUTION: A copy of this material has been sent to each State club leader.

Thus far in this series we have studied America's Indian Music, America's Negro Spirituals and Songs, America's Patriotic Music, and America's Hymns and Religious Songs. Perhaps our topic for to-day, America's Country Dances, should be reworded.

Semper Fidelis - Sousa

But before we take up our study, we pay tribute to one of America's great composers who has just left us, John Philip Sousa. It may interest you to know that Mr. Sousa had personally consented to compose a march dedicated to the 4-H clubs. That work must now be undertaken by another. Here we are in the auditorium of the Marine Barracks in Washington, D. C., in the very room in which, for 12 years, Mr. Sousa directed the United States Marine Band. What could be more fitting than to open the first 4-H club radio program since Mr. Sousa's death with one of his marches, Semper Fidelis, a composition dedicated to the band which plays for us during these broadcasts? "Semper fidelis" is a Latin term meaning "always faithful," and is the motto of the United States Marine Corps. Captain Branson, may I ask the United States Marine Band to play Semper Fidelis, by Sousa?

Now to return to our study of America's country-dances.

The term "country-dance" is improperly used for the French "contredanse," of which the English term is a corruption. A contredanse is a dance or party game, in which as many folks can take part as can be accommodated in the space provided and which begins with the gentlemen arranged on one side and the ladies on the other. In its figure, the dancers are constantly changing places, leading one another forward and backward, up and down, parting and uniting again.

Turkey in the Straw - Transcribed by Guion

Possibly one of the most familiar of America's so-called country-dance tunes is Turkey in the Straw. David Guion has arranged a transcription of this tune, which will be played for us now by the United States Marine Band, Capt. Taylor Branson conducting.

Oh! Susanna - Foster

Stephen Collins Foster wrote Oh! Susanna as a song, but the music is much used as a country-dance or party-game tune. As a young man, Foster had a group of five friends, young men, who came to his house twice each week to study singing under his direction, and Oh! Susanna is one of the songs he composed for this group. Through three-quarters of a century of usage, this tune has become well known on the plantations of the South, on the plains of the West, in the pioneer cabins of the North, and in the more thickly populated centers of the East. It is truly one of America's own singing-game tunes.

The United States Marine Band, Capt. Taylor Branson conducting, plays Oh! Susanna, by Foster.

A Virginia Reel (Pop Goes the Weasel)

In colonial days, the Virginia reel was popular throughout the country occupied by the colonists. Its popularity is maintained even to-day. And what group of farm boys and girls would not enjoy it at a 4-H club meeting, held, possibly, on the lawn in front of the farm home? You all know that "Virginia reel" is the name of the dance or game itself, and that any one of many tunes or combinations of tunes may be played for it. Pop Goes the Weasel and The Devil's Dream constitute one of these combinations, and those tunes are now to be played by the United States Marine Band, Capt. Taylor Branson conducting.

To attempt to list all of America's country-dance tunes, to state their origin, or to name the composers, would be a more or less impossible task. Among the more familiar tunes are The Arkansas Traveler; Captain Jinks; Old Zip Coon; Sailors' and Fishers' Hornpipe; Money Musk; Shoo Fly; Come, My Love; Promenade the Hall; Old Doc Jones; Sandy Land; Jolly is the Miller; and Old Dan Tucker. In certain sections of the country, other tunes are equally well known. Since many of these tunes are somewhat similar, to play all of them to-day would doubtless result in a rather monotonous program, but the four examples which we have just heard are typical.

In many foreign countries, folk dances have established themselves in the hearts of country folk. European nations are justly proud of their folk dances. America may well emulate these countries in this regard. Many farm boys and girls in America know some of the folk dances and singing games of other countries because their fathers and mothers used to live in those countries, but perhaps these boys and girls are not as familiar with America's own singing games or dances. However, America has a rich store of these dancing games which developed in pioneer days, such as the circle dance games of the Appalachian Mountains. An eminent authority classifies our Kentucky set running as one of the most beautiful folk dances to be found anywhere in the world. At their 4-H club meetings, camps, and picnics, farm boys and girls throughout the land might participate even more than they do at present in these folk games and dances and thus provide one means of perpetuating these examples of America's folklore in the form of wholesome rural recreation.

Now may we turn our attention to examples of music used in dances of a somewhat different sort, but all of which are American in origin.

Barn Dance - Mills

From what I can learn, the barn dance originated some 30 years ago. It became a favorite at husking bees and similar events, and later won for itself considerable popularity in the cities. With Capt. Taylor Branson conducting, the United States Marine Band plays a composition entitled "Barn Dance," by Mills.

At a Georgia Camp Meeting - Mills

Throughout the sunny South, the cakewalk is a favorite dance of the negroes. A cakewalk is a dance in which a prize is given to the couple whose dress and dancing are the funniest. Kerry Mills has given us a typical example of music used in this dance and he has named it "At a Georgia Camp Meeting." It is played now by the United States Marine Band, Capt. Taylor Branson conducting.

Juba Dance - Dett

Robert Nathaniel Dett, one of America's foremost negro composers, who is now head of the music department of Hampton Institute in Virginia, has written the Juba Dance. This is the next example of original American dance music to be played by the United States Marine Band, Capt. Taylor Branson conducting.

Before we listen to our last selection in to-day's National 4-H Music Achievement Test, may I tell you that during the next National 4-H Club Radio Program at this same hour on Saturday, May 7, we shall study America's Favorite Songs.

Deer Dance - Skilton

Now let us listen to an example of the music used by the original Americans, the Indians, in their dances. The Deer Dance, by Charles Sanford Skilton, is a musical picture of the annual memorial service of the Rogue River Indians of Oregon. The drum beats incessantly as the whole company of Indians stand in a half circle, men and women alternately, while the dancers pass in and out between them, imitating the hunter pursuing the deer and exploiting the deeds of those hunters who have gone to the Happy Hunting Ground.

Under the baton of Capt. Taylor Branson, the United States Marine Band brings to a close our musical period for to-day by playing the Deer Dance, by Skilton.